

# IN HONOR OF THE VICTIMS OF THE SHOOTING AT THE INDIANAPOLIS FEDEX FACILITY

## HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 26, 2021*

Mr. CARSON. Madam Speaker, I rise with my fellow Congressional colleagues from Indiana to honor the 8 Hoosiers we lost in the senseless shooting at the FedEx facility in Indianapolis.

We also honor those who were injured, and pray that they have a full and fast recovery.

The deceased were our friends, family and neighbors.

They had hopes, dreams, and plans for the future—only to have their lives tragically cut short.

And sadly, they are part of a much larger group of Hoosiers and Americans we have lost to gun violence.

As our community and our state grieve, and as we seek to move forward, we pledge to never forget those we lost—in this shooting, or any other senseless act of violence.

Their legacies will live on through our efforts to save lives in the future.

Hoosiers are resilient, and we will continue working hard to create safer communities across America, always carrying the memory of those we have lost in our hearts.

We will never forget them.

[Apr. 18, 2021]

### INDIANAPOLIS FEDEX SHOOTING: WHO WERE THE EIGHT VICTIMS?

Officials in Indianapolis have released the names of the eight people who were killed when a gunman opened fire at a FedEx warehouse on Thursday night.

Among the victims were four members of the local Sikh community—including a mother, a father and two grandmothers. Other victims include two 19-year-olds, a university graduate and a father.

Local Sikhs say they feel “traumatized” by the attack.

It remains unclear if Sikhs were targeted, authorities say.

About 90% of workers at the facility are members of the local Sikh community, police chief Randal Taylor said. Here’s what we know about the victims.

#### AMARJEET JOHAL, 66

Johal was a “mother, grandmother and member of the Indianapolis’ Sikh community”, according to the Indianapolis Star.

Her granddaughter, Komal Chohan, says she is “heartbroken” at the death of her “nani”, or grandmother.

“I have several family members who work at the particular facility and are traumatized,” Ms Chohan said in a statement released by the Sikh Coalition.

“My nani, my family, and our families should not feel unsafe at work, at their place of worship, or anywhere,” she said. “Enough is enough—our community has been through enough trauma.”

#### JASWINDER SINGH

Mr. Singh only started working at the FedEx facility this week and had told everyone how excited he was, an inlaw, Harjap Singh Dillon, told the New York Times. He said Mr. Singh had been working a night-shift sorting mail when the attack happened.

An active member of the local temple, Mr. Singh had moved to Indianapolis from California.

“He was a simple man,” Mr. Dillon said. “He used to pray and meditate a lot, and he did community service.” Authorities provided Mr. Singh’s age as 68, but his family told the newspaper that he was 70.

#### AMARJIT SEKHON

A mother of two sons, Ms Sekhon began working at the FedEx facility six months ago on an overnight shift, her niece told the New York Times.

“She was a workaholic, she always was working, working. She would never sit still unless she felt really bad,” her brother-in-law, Kuldip Sekhon, told the Associated Press news agency.

While officials said Sekhon was 48, her relatives said she was 49.

Ms. Kaur had been planning to make her “renowned yogurt” to celebrate for her granddaughter’s second birthday at a large family gathering on Saturday, Rimpi Girm, a family member, told the New York Times.

“And today we’re gathering to plan a funeral,” she said.

Authorities said Kaur was 64, but her family told media outlets she was 50.

Samaria Blackwell was a 19-year-old soccer and basketball enthusiast who dreamed of becoming a police officer.

Her parents, Jeff and Tammi Blackwell, said they were “blessed by the Lord to have such a fun-loving, caring daughter as the baby of our family”, in a statement posted on GoFundMe page launched to fund funeral and other expenses.

“Samaria was tenacious in everything she did, from playing basketball and soccer to being a lifeguard for Indy Parks,” they said. “As an intelligent, straight-A student, Samaria could have done anything she chose to put her mind to.”

Mr. Weisert was a former Air Force officer who served in Vietnam and had previously worked as a mechanical engineer “to make ends meet”, his son, Mike Weisert, told the New York Times. Mike Weisert said his father had been thinking of retiring in the coming months.

Mr. Weisert’s wife of 50 years, Mary Carol Weisert, told local broadcaster WKRC she felt “terror, horror, fear, shock” at his death. “I don’t know how else to describe it.”

A fan of action and classic movies, he enjoyed playing country and bluegrass guitar, according to the New York Times.

Mike Weisert described his father as “a very decent, kind man, very dedicated to protecting and providing for the ones he loved”.

Ms. Smith was a sister and daughter, the Indianapolis Star reported her family saying.

The recent High School graduate was awaiting her first pay cheque after starting work at the plant two weeks ago, a family member told the newspaper.

“She was a lovely, beautiful and youthful teenage girl,” a family member told the Indianapolis Star. “She had just started to buckle down and get a job and take life a little more serious.”

Mr. Alexander was a former Butler University student who had worked at FedEx for several years, according to the Indianapolis Star.

“He was a great kid. He loved to play golf. Had a big heart—always had a smile on his face,” Albert Ashcraft, a former FedEx colleague, told the newspaper.

“Everybody liked him,” Ashcraft said. “He was always saving somebody’s ass. People would bring doughnuts in and he was always sticking doughnuts back for his drivers.”

“The Butler community is mourning the loss of Matthew Alexander, a former student who was killed tragically along with seven others at the FedEx facility in Indianapolis.

We want to extend our deepest sympathies to Matthew’s friends and families during this time of great sorrow,” the university said in a tweet.

#### LETTER FROM SIKH COMMUNITY

#### INDIANAPOLIS FEDEX MASS SHOOTING— SUPPORTING THE SIKH COMMUNITY

DEAR REP. CARSON, like you, we are deeply saddened by the senseless act of deadly violence at the FedEx facility in Indianapolis where eight people were viciously murdered, including four Sikhs. On behalf of the Sikh Coalition, the nation’s largest Sikh civil rights organization, we write to urge your action in support of the investigation and to outline longer-term recommendations that can help ensure the future safety of the diverse communities across the United States.

By way of background, Sikhism is the world’s fifth largest religion, with over 25 million followers. Sikhs began settling in Indiana more than 50 years ago, and the community established its first gurdwara (Sikh house of worship) in 1999. We estimate that there are at least 8,000-10,000 Sikhs who currently live in Indiana. In the last two decades, the Sikh population in greater Indianapolis has experienced significant growth. As a community that has proudly been a part of the Indiana fabric for generations, Sikhs deserve to be safe in their workplaces, homes, schools, and houses of worship—without hate and bias.

We recognize that a motive has not yet been established by law enforcement; however, the attacker’s knowledge of the demographics of this workplace and who he was targeting, as well as his personal history must be taken into account in order to acknowledge the impact of hate, bias and white supremacist activity affecting our communities. Based on public reporting, the shooter allegedly had a propensity for violence—something his mother had previously warned law enforcement about. On March 3, 2020 Brandon Hole’s mother went to the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) after her son had purchased a shotgun. She warned law enforcement that her son might commit “suicide by cop.” At this time, FBI agents stated that they did not identify Hole as espousing a racially motivated ideology. However, according to April 20, 2021 media reports, when IMPD officers went to the family’s home, one of the officers went upstairs to seize the shotgun and “observed what through his training and experience indicated was white supremacist websites” on Hole’s computer. At the time, officers also reportedly notified the criminal intelligence unit about what was observed on Hole’s computer and took the shotgun to the police department’s property room with “seized by dangerous person” written on the inventory sheet. To that end, the Sikh Coalition strongly urges both the IMPD and the FBI to fully investigate Mr. Hole’s attack on the Indianapolis FedEx facility, including all bias motivating factors which may be at play.

It was no accident that the shooter targeted this particular FedEx facility where he had previously worked and knew was overwhelmingly staffed by Sikhs. This was not a crime of convenience or a spur-of-the-moment attack; it was one of methodical planning and selection. As such, we implore your office to help ensure that there is an unfettered investigation into motive, without leaving any stone unturned regarding bias as a motivating factor. We also ask that your office ensure that these concerns are not prematurely dismissed.

The most recent available FBI data shows that 2019 was the deadliest year for hate crimes. Sadly, Sikhs were once again among the top five faith groups targeted on the

basis of religion. As members of a religious minority who have been frequently targeted in violent attacks, often motivated by bias, we remain deeply concerned about how bias, bigotry and the resulting backlash impact all of our communities.

To address these broader concerns, we request that your office stand in solidarity with the Sikh community and other minority communities and pledge action that will ensure the safety of your constituents by supporting the policy goals shared below:

1. Unequivocally demand that local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies conduct a comprehensive and thorough investigation into the shooter's motive including accurately identifying any nexus to white supremacist ideology based on the shooter's personal history. Doing so would signal to your constituents that no one should be targeted because of their race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.

2. Improve hate crime reporting by passing the recently re-introduced Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act [H.R. 2383/S. 1086] and ensuring that all law enforcement agencies are required to report hate crimes. This should be part of a larger initiative that prioritizes data collection, a key component of civil rights enforcement and ensuring compliance with federal hate crime and nondiscrimination laws.

3. Close the loophole that limits federal prosecution of mixed-motive hate crimes by reintroducing and passing the Justice for Victims of Hate Crime Act. To effectively combat hate crimes, law enforcement and advocates need the tools to hold offenders accountable and ensure our justice system protects all Americans. This important change addresses a split in federal courts on the interpretation of the motive requirement in the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 that currently leaves many victims without justice.

4. Reintroduce and pass the Disarm Hate Act to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of dangerous individuals. Shooters opening fire on houses of worship, community centers, and other soft targets are becoming far too common. More than 10,000 hate crimes in the U.S. involved a firearm. Anyone who has been convicted of a misdemeanor hate crime should not be allowed to jeopardize the peace of communities.

5. Request state and federal funding for 360-degree victim assistance services that include language accessible hate crime reporting, mental health services, comprehensive trauma-informed support, and technical assistance and advocates for victims and survivors of hate crimes and mass casualty incidents such as these.

We are also happy to provide resources, sample social media messaging, information on the Sikh community, and guidance on how to support the aforementioned recommendations. If you would like us to keep you informed about vigils or other ways to support the Indianapolis Sikh community, please let us know and we will make sure to share those with you.

We thank you for your efforts to help protect the communities we serve and look forward to working with your office to move these important policy priorities forward.

Sincerely,

SIM J. SINGH,  
Sikh Coalition.

## TRANSIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 19, 2021

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD an exchange of letters between the Committee on Homeland Security and the Committee on the Budget on H.R. 396, the "Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act".

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,  
Washington, DC, April 7, 2021.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write to confirm our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 396, the Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act. H.R. 396 contains provisions that fall within the rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Budget. However, the committee agrees to waive formal consideration of the bill.

The Committee on the Budget takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues within our jurisdiction. The committee also reserves the right to seek appointment to any House-Senate conference convened on this legislation or similar legislation and requests your support if such a request is made.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and I ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

JOHN YARMUTH,  
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
Washington, DC, April 9, 2021.

Hon. JOHN YARMUTH,  
Chairman, Committee on the Budget,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN YARMUTH: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 396, the "Transit Security Grant Program Flexibility Act." I recognize that the Committee on the Budget has a jurisdictional interest in H.R. 396, and appreciate your effort to allow this bill to be considered on the House floor.

I concur with you that forgoing action on the bill does not in any way prejudice the Committee on the Budget with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future, and I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include our letters on H.R. 396 in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill. I look forward to working with you on this legislation and other matters of great importance to this nation.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,  
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security.

## REMEMBERING LYNNE JORDAN TURLEY

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 26, 2021

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend Lynne Jordan Turley, a music and arts educator and a civic leader who lived a life full of purpose and meaning.

Lynne gave to others because she cared for them and wanted to make the world a better place. She did this through her profession as an educator, both in Memphis and in New York City, where she helped to produce educational texts.

She participated in civic affairs, both political and charitable. She was always for the candidate who supported the underdog and the downtrodden.

Civically, the Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center at Rhodes College will and has contributed to the betterment of our city. Lynne was a talented musician who played her piano and sang to the enjoyment of children and friends both in person and on her WKNO television program.

Lynne was a good friend to me both personally and politically. She was sweet and smart and cheery. She had good values that she shared and a big heart that was always open. Her journey from Selma to Memphis to New York and back to Memphis was eventful and exciting.

She was the perfect spouse for her husband Henry as she complemented his abilities and talents and the two were greater for having each other. She had a host of friends, a group known as "the Wild Women" who were very active in community affairs, got involved in politics and encouraged people to vote and make a difference.

When they set their minds to something, they got it done. There wasn't a bigger Memphis Grizzlies fan than Lynne, who loved going to every game and knew all the players, all the fans, and all the ushers. She loved them and they loved her.

I extend my deepest condolences to her husband and my dear friend, Henry; her extended family, and her many friends. She led an exemplary life and will be greatly missed.

## STATE OF ISRAEL AT 73

HON. ELAINE G. LURIA

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 26, 2021

Mrs. LURIA. Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD remarks submitted at the request of a Virginia Beach constituent, Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman, of Temple Lev Tikvah and is a reflection of his views:

Distinguished Israeli historian Tom Segev was born in Jerusalem in 1945, earned his doctorate at Boston University and his books were translated into fourteen languages. In his *A State At Any Cost* (The Life of David Ben-Gurion). Farrar, Straus and Girous. 2018, he treats us to a mesmerizing account of Israel's first prime minister's tumultuous life in the context of fateful times for the Jewish people and humanity. It is